

National Hurricane Program

Working for Safer Communities

Southeast U.S. Hurricane Evacuation Study

In September 1999, the largest peacetime evacuation ever to take place in the United States occurred as a result of Hurricane Floyd. Because of massive public response, huge out-of-county and out-of-state evacuee movements, and multiple states loading onto a limited road network within a very short time, traffic congestion reached levels never before seen by the public. The public's experience during the Floyd evacuation and their resulting outcry to elected officials and emergency management professionals "to fix the evacuation problem" has resulted in many Federal, state, and local initiatives to better manage evacuations.

Under the directives of Vice President Gore, FEMA, USDOT, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers joined together to address problems that arose during Floyd. The objectives of this multi-agency, multi-state effort study were to:

- determine what the public did in response to Floyd,
- develop a web based travel demand forecast system that would anticipate evacuation traffic congestion and cross state travel flows, and
- coordinate with state DOTs on one-way strategies and ITS technologies.

The study findings have been published in three technical memoranda:

- **Technical Memorandum 1** – Behavioral Analysis
- **Technical Memorandum 2** – Evacuation Travel Demand Forecasting System
- **Technical Memorandum 3** – Reverse Lane Standards and ITS Strategies

